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TAGS: [IZ](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [PTER](#)
SUBJECT: BAGHDAD'S KARADA DISTRICT SECURITY SITUATION
REF: BAGHDAD 03792

Classified By: Classified by Joseph Gregoire,
PRT Team Leader, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: On October 12 PolOff met with Abdulla Amir, Deputy Council Chairman and District Douncil Security Chairman in Karada, a relatively prosperous, predominantly Shia but mixed Baghdad district near the International Zone (IZ). Abdulla told PolOff that Jaish al Mahdi (JAM) militia members began infiltrating the Karada District four months ago and are starting to cause problems for local residents. Abdulla believes that Karada may become a key zone in the fight for control of Baghdad due to Karada,s central location, contiguity to the IZ, heavy presence of GOI official residences, and road network through Karada that link keys areas of the city. Abdulla is convinced that the October 8 assassination of Karada Neighborhood Council Chairman Sheik Majeed Mohmoud, a strong local leader, was a carried out by the Sadr-affiliated Mahdi Army militia (JAM) because of Sheik Majeed,s work as a local neighborhood leader and support to the District Council. END SUMMARY.

MILITIA INFILTRATION

¶2. (C) Abdulla Amir, Deputy Council Chair and Head of the Security Committee for Karada, in west-central Baghdad, told PolOff that he is increasingly concerned about the worsening security situation in the Karada District. Abdulla said that although Karada is considered safer then most other areas of Baghdad, he began noticing more problems about four months ago. He attributes the problemes to criminal and militia elements infiltrating from the adjoining districts of Dora and 9 Nissan (New Baghdad). The problems are particularly bad in the Riyadh neighborhood, bordering 9 Nissan, where JAM militias recently attacked residents and bombed a store. Abdulla is aware of at least 10 stores and residences that have been taken over by criminal or militia elements and are being used as operating bases within Karada. According to Abdulla, JAM has also taken control of some of the mosques in Karada, including the district's largest and most important mosque. Abdulla has reported some of this activity to the local Iraqi police chief, who has not investigated -- he believes due to fear, lack of training and corruption.

¶3. (C) Abdulla believes that security in Karada could rapidly deteriorate and the area become very dangerous and hard to control if the increasing militia activity is unchecked. Because of Karada,s border with the IZ, the presence of numerous government officials, and the road network through Karada that ties the city together, Karada is key terrain for militias and insurgents. Abdulla fears that violence may continue to rise and Karada may become a key battle ground due to the large number of MNF-I convoys and other high value targets that enter or leave the IZ through the district or pass through Karada.

ASSASSINATION OF A STRONG LOCAL LEADER

¶4. (C) Abdulla is convinced that the attack and murder of Karada Sindabad Neighborhood Council Chair Sheik Majeed Majmood Mohammed and his cousin on October 8 was a JAM operation. Abdulla predicted the loss of Majeed to the neighborhood and district will be significant. Although a Sunni in a predominantly Shia district, Majeed was a highly respected, well-liked moderate and strong leader in his neighborhood. An MNF-I investigation into the attack against Sheik Majeed suggested it was consistent with JAM operations in the area.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: The Karada District, a predominantly Shia but mixed neighborhood, is still considered relatively secure and prosperous by Baghdad standards. Abdulla's report and concern over increasing JAM and criminal activity are consistent with other reporting confirming that Karada is being squeezed by militia and criminal elements coming in from both sides, Doura on the West and 9 Nissan on the East. The murder of Sheik Majeed is the second assassination of a neighborhood council representative reported to the PRT within the past three weeks (reftel).
KHALILZAD